

Plant Health Protection Update



- EPA has extended the deadline for comment on the [proposed revision to the Certification of Pesticide Applicators Rule](#) until **December 23, 2015**. According to EPA, the rule would help keep our communities safe, protect the environment and reduce risk to those applying pesticides. Pesticide use would be safer with increased supervision and oversight and would help ensure that the riskiest pesticides are used safely. A fact sheet, a simple comparison of existing and proposed requirements and an extensive detailed comparison table are available at this link, in addition to links to the Federal Register docket, where one can view background and supporting documentation, and comment directly on this proposal. A few of the major proposed changes for Nebraska applicators follow:

Under the proposed federal changes, first-time private applicators would need to be tested and the minimum age for certification would be 18, compared to Nebraska's current age of 16. Every three years private applicators would need to be recertified with five hours of training. More training is needed if applicators wish to become certified in another category.

Also proposed a Continuing Education Unit (CEU) training program, where one CEU is defined as 50 minutes of active training time. Both private and commercial applicators would receive six CEUs covering core content (general standards such as application techniques), three CEUs for each private category (new categories proposed include aerial, soil fumigation, and non-soil fumigation), and six CEUs for each commercial category. Currently applicators in Nebraska aren't required to train for a specific time, although each of several competencies must be addressed during recertification training.

- [What's in my Groundwater and is it OK?](#), is an informational poster about the monitoring results stored in the Nebraska Agrichemical Contaminant Database for Nebraska Groundwater. The database is publically accessible and can be queried in several ways, including geographic location and well registration number. The poster can be viewed at the preceding link, and the database itself, can be found at bit.ly/NEGWagchemDB.



- The [Winter 2015-2016 edition](#) of Nebraska Department of Agriculture's Pesticide, Fertilizer & Noxious Weed Newsletter has been posted online. This edition features a new look and name but will still contain the information you count on.
- The National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) has released the following infographics about pesticide safety: NPIC infographic about home pesticides and school disinfectants
 - [Let's talk about pesticides in your home](#)
 - [Disinfectants in Schools - a conversation](#)

More information from NPIC can be found here: npic.orst.edu/.

- Revisions to the Worker Protection Standard - On November 2, 2015, the EPA published the final revised Worker Protection Standard (WPS) rule in the Federal Register. The revised WPS rule updates several aspects of the original rule written in 1992, and is intended to provide protection from pesticide exposure for agricultural workers and their families. Among of the changes are the following:
 - creating a minimum age of 18 for handlers of pesticides;
 - increasing the training requirements for workers and handlers;
 - updating requirements for Restricted Entry Intervals (REI's);
 - adding Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements for handlers; and
 - requiring certain setbacks from field crews under certain situations.

The final rule will be effective January 1, 2016. Compliance with most aspects of the new rule will be required by January 2, 2017, with the remaining parts requiring compliance by January 1, 2018. NDA will be providing additional information at certification meetings over the next two or three years, as well as at trade shows and during routine inspections. For more information on the new WPS rule and how to comply, including a complete listing of the changes, please go to the following website: bit.ly/epaWPSrule.

- The economic cost of invasive species to agriculture, forestry, fisheries and water recreation, utilities, buildings and natural areas can be great. The recently released version of the [2016 Nebraska Boating Guide](#), published by the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, contains information on a new \$5 boat registration fee for residents (pg. 5), and requirements for an aquatic invasive species stamp for nonresident boats (pages 14 & 15), which will go toward programs to reduce the potential for aquatic invasive species becoming established in the State. In addition, a description of prevention measures required for all boaters, before and after entering the water, is included. Additional information about Nebraska's invasive species and prevention measures can be found at [Nebraska Invasive Species Program](#).

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